

INDIANA'S STATE FOREST AND FOREST RECREATION AREA SYSTEM

Forest Management

Humans have a long history as users of products from forests and trees. Forest resources provided food, shelter, clothing, tools, recreation, emotional/spiritual value, stories/lore, and cover from enemies. The utilization of forest resources was essential for human success at survival and advancement. Over time, this reliance on forest resources to improve the quality of our lives has become increasingly important. It has also fostered an awareness of the need to manage the forest resource to provide for a continual supply of forest products and values to benefit people. The fact that trees and forests are renewable resources is the basis for forest management. Forests provide a variety of commodity and non-commodity products including recreation, wildlife, game, timber, watershed, clean air, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, solitude, and emotional well being.

Beginning in the early 1900's, the Indiana legislature recognized the importance of forest management to the well being of its citizens and economy by purchasing state forest lands. Later legislation laid the foundation for the management of state forests (IC 14-23-4-1):

"It is the public policy of Indiana to protect and conserve the timber, water resources, wildlife, and topsoil in the forests owned and operated by the division of forestry for the equal enjoyment and guaranteed use of future generations. However, by the employment of good husbandry, timber that has a substantial commercial value may be removed in a manner that benefits the growth of saplings and other trees by thinnings, improvement cuttings, and harvest processes and at the same time provides a source of revenue to the state and counties and provides local markets with a further source of building material."

This and other enabling legislation give basic direction to state forest management. The basic direction is to protect and conserve forest resources for a variety of products and benefits. This concept of forest management is known as multiple-use management. This provides multiple public benefits by managing for as many compatible uses of the forest resources as possible. Today, state forest management combines the legislative directives with current knowledge from research and public use information. Indiana's state forests are managed to provide many benefits including outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, conservation education, timber, watershed protection, scenic value, and emotional uplift.

Resource History

Indiana's state forests lie within the central hardwood region. Major forest types in this region include oak-hickory, beech-maple, and bottomland hardwoods. Over the past several

thousand years this region has been undergoing transition following the last glacial retreat. The glacial advance had pushed forest types much farther south than they currently are.

When the state forest lands were being purchased, they were predominately second-growth oak-hickory timber type. When the State purchased this land starting in the early 1900's, the majority of it was characterized by cut-over, burnt, and eroded areas that had little value left for the landowners. From the period 1860 through 1910 these lands were cleared for farm development and wood production. Regular burning of the forest was a common practice to improve it for livestock grazing. The early logging operations removed only the high-quality black walnut, yellow-poplar, black cherry, white oak, and other select species. Subsequent operations removed the remaining merchantable timber. Residual stands consisted of culls, small trees, and less desirable species. Many areas were cropped that had steep slopes or erodible soils. Lacking modern conservation farming practices, the topsoil was quickly depleted and lost. The poorer subsoil was unable to support continued agriculture. Populations of many wildlife species were decimated by subsistence hunting and loss of habitat. The present day forests developed from the abandoned, subsistence landholdings.

The Clark Forest Reserve, located outside Henryville, was started in 1903 with the acquisition of 2000 acres of worn out land. This was one of the first state forests in the country. It was created for the purposes of a state forest reservation, laboratory of forestry demonstration and State nurseries. Funding was provided for the expenses of the reserve, and revenues from the sale of any timber, leases, contracts for the mining and removal of minerals or any other source whatever from such land were part of the revenues of the State. Additions to Clark State Forest and the creation of other state forests followed in subsequent decades.

With the State's acquisition of these lands, a process of reducing erosion and protecting and developing forest stands began. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was instrumental in this process by planting thousands of acres of eroding and bare ground to hardwood and pine trees. Residual hardwood stands were allowed to develop and recover from past harvesting, fire and grazing. Timber stand improvement projects were used to nurture the growth of the trees. Many other bare areas never received attention and were left to develop low quality, scrubby stands. Very few records exist of early timber management activities. It is known that a large quantity of timber was harvested to support the CCC operations and sawmills. Also, many rural electric cooperatives received their first utility poles from state forest stands. Many were treated with creosote on the state forests. There are also references to early commercial timber sales, though specifics are very limited.

Over time these pine and hardwood stands developed and improved. In the 1960's, timber management activities became better known with the arrival of professional foresters and improved recordkeeping on the state forest properties. In the 1970's, the first timber management procedures were written. With a further addition of professional foresters and professional managers, timber management activities increased. Today, timber management has developed into integrated forest resource management. The future management of the state forests involves

the integration of ecosystem management and ecological classification concepts.

The degraded, cut-over forest of a few decades ago is now characterized by mature, even-aged stands of medium to large sawtimber. Over twenty cover types are present. Over fifty species of trees are represented on state forest land.

Before examining present policy or future direction, it is useful to review the history of Indiana's state forest system. A chronological list of the highlights is presented below.

**William H. Freeman - State Forester
1901-1909**

1901 State Board of Forestry created

1903 March 3 - House Bill 98 authorizes purchase of 2000 acres of land in Clark County to create forest reserve - Clark State Forest created

**Charles C. Deam - State Forester
1909-1913**

**Elijah A. Gladden - State Forester
1913-1917**

**Richard Lieber - State Forester
(Charles Deam - Acting)
1917-1919**

**Charles C. Deam - State Forester
1919-1928**

1919 Department of Conservation created

1921 Indiana Forest Tax Classification Act enacted

1923 First professional forester employed in Department of Conservation

1925 LaFuze Act enacted - provided tax money to state forestry fund

1928 Cooperative forest fire prevention and suppression agreement with U.S. Forest Service (authorized 1931)

**Ralph F. Wilcox - State Forester
1929-1936**

1929 Morgan-Monroe State Forest created

1931 Jackson-Washington State Forest created; Martin State Forest created

1932 Harrison-Crawford State Forest created

1933 Civilian Conservation Corps initiated

1934 Ferdinand State Forest created; Pike State Forest created

1936 Greene-Sullivan State Forest created

**Hershel A. Woods - State Forester
1936-1940**

1939 Salamonie River State Forest created

**Paul Yost - State Forester
1940-1942**

1940 Frances Slocum State Forest created; Jasper-Pulaski Tree Nursery created

**T. E. Shaw - State Forester (Acting)
1942-1945**

1942 Civilian Conservation Corps ended

**Ralph F. Wilcox - State Forester
1945-1962**

1947 Yellowwood State Forest created

1948 Owen-Putnam State Forest created

1953 Selmier State Forest created

1962 Starve Hollow State Recreation Area created

**Robert D. Raisch - State Forester
1962-1965**

1963 Deam Lake State Recreation Area created

1965 Department of Conservation becomes the Department of Natural Resources

**David M. Click - State Forester
1965-1969**

1966 Wyandotte Caves State Recreation Area created

**John T. Costello - State Forester
1969-1973**

1971 Property Managers Act enacted

**John F. Datena - State Forester
1973-1989**

1980 Wyandotte Woods State Recreation Area created

1981 Vallonia Tree Nursery transferred from U.S. Forest Service to Division of Forestry

**Burnell C. Fischer - State Forester
1990-2005**

1996 Recreation administration of Frances Slocum State Forest transferred to Mississinewa Reservoir; Recreation administration of Salamonie River State Forest transferred to Salamonie Reservoir; administration of Wyandotte Woods SRA and Harrison-Crawford State Forest combined; administration of Yellowwood and Morgan-Monroe State Forests is combined; administration of Ferdinand and Pike State Forests is combined.

**John Seifert - State Forester
2005-Present**

2005 Expanded land acquisition program; implemented long-term research program.

2007 Certified state forests through Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council; combined administration of Jackson-Washington SF and Starve Hollow SRA; combined administration of Clark SF and Deam Lake SRA.

Current Management

State forests and forest recreation areas currently operate under a management philosophy that may be described as integrated stewardship. This management philosophy uses active decision-making to produce consumptive and nonconsumptive benefits in a sustainable manner. This philosophy is incorporated in the enacting legislation for state forests.

State forests and forest recreation areas work to integrate the management of all the resources into the overall management of the properties. In general, the approach in providing benefits is extensive rather than intensive. The goal is to have most areas of the properties contribute to many state forest programs. Areas are usually expected to produce a variety of benefits at a moderate level. For example, a typical tract may produce timber at a moderate rate, provide moderate habitat diversity, provide a dispersed recreation opportunity, and have some demonstration value. There are some exceptions, such as intensive recreation areas or nature preserves, where physical limitations, uniqueness, or other factors require some areas to be managed predominately for a particular benefit.

Future Management

As indicated above, the current management philosophy is primarily the same now as was spelled out in legislation decades ago. The biggest changes come in new terminology and a better understanding of the function of the forest ecosystem and its many parts.

Trends indicate that in resource conservation, more emphasis may be placed on overall habitat management than species management. Management alternatives will be viewed in a broader context of a landscape setting. There may be increased use of management tools to help create forest conditions, particularly in the understory, that are similar to pre-European settlement.

The forests that are now largely even-aged, relatively young, and with simple stand structure will continue to mature. The average tree will increase in size and age. A more varied, multi-aged stand structure will develop. This will greatly enhance both timber commodity and many intangible benefits. Large and higher value trees will be produced. The many large trees and succession from pioneer stands will increase scenic and recreational values.

Section Bullet Summary

- Legislation gave basic direction to state forest management. This basic direction guides the current management philosophy with changes as information and knowledge has

increased.

- Human use and disturbances have affected Indiana's forests of thousands of years.
- State forests emerged out of the conservation ethic and have been growing and changing ever since.
- State forests and forest recreation areas are managed to provide a wide variety of benefits and values.
- The management scheme will evolve as knowledge of resources increases. Overall forest condition will mature and will take on more characteristics of old forest conditions.